

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, VE

SUBJECT: ALFONZO RAVARD MAY HEAD NATIONALIZED OIL INDUSTRY

1. REPORTING WHAT HAS BEEN WIDELY RUMORED HERE FOR MANY MONTHS, THE CARACAS "EL NACIONAL" PRINTED ON ITS FRONT PAGE FEBRUARY 14 THAT RETIRED GENERAL RAFAEL ALFONZO RAVARD QUOTE WILL BE DESIGNATED TO HEAD BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF WHAT WILL BE HOLDING COMPANY FOR NATIONALIZED VENEZUELAN OIL INDUSTRY UNQUOTE. FUNCTIONS WHICH HOLDING COMPANY WILL INITIALLY ASSUME ARE SAID TO STILL BE UNDER STUDY IN MINISTRY OF MINES AND HYDROCARBONS, BUT IS CONSIDERED LIKELY THAT THIS QUESTION WILL BE DECIDED AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHOSEN BEFORE END OF MARCH.

2. RUMOR MAY HAVE SUBSTANCE. PRESIDENT PEREZ, IN MID-JANUARY MEETING WITH SOME 360 VENEZUELAN OIL INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES, APPEARED TO EXCLUDE POLITICIANS FROM CONSIDERATION FOR THIS POSITION. WITH POLITICIANS REMOVED, ANYBODY OTHER THAN GENERAL ALFONZO WOULD BE A REAL DARKHORSE AND WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY GAINING WIDESPREAD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

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3. GENERAL ALFONZO IS SO WELL KNOWN IN U.S. CIRCLES THAT IT HARDLY

BEARS REPEATING HIS BACKGROUND. CURRENTLY, HE HAS PRIVATE CONSULTING OFFICE, IS DIRECTOR OF NUMEROUS PRIVATE COMPANIES, AND IS THE GOVERNMENT OBSERVER OF CREOLE PETROLEUM CORPORATION. FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS GENERAL ALFONZO WAS ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUAYANA AREA. HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE VENEZUELA GUAYANA CORPORATION FROM ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1960 UNTIL THE ADVENT OF THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION IN MARCH 1974. A CIVIL ENGINEERING GRADUATE FROM MIT, TOGETHER WITH STUDY IN ITALY AND FRANCE, THE GENERAL IS GIVEN THE MAJOR CREDIT FOR ATTRACTING SUBSTANTIAL PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO THE GUAYANA AREA AND ESTABLISHING THE INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH WILL INSURE THE REGION'S CONTINUED GROWTH INTO A MAJOR INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX OF OUR HEMISPHERE.

4. WITHOUT QUESTION THE PRIVATE FOREIGN OIL INDUSTRY WOULD WELCOME HIS SELECTION TO HEAD THE NATIONALIZED INDUSTRY. FROM A U.S. GOVERNMENT POINT OF VIEW, GENERAL ALFONZO WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT CHOICE. ABOVE ALL, HE IS PRACTICAL AND REASONABLE. HE WOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN SOME FORM OF OIL COMPANY ROLE AFTER NATIONALIZATION. HE COULD ALSO BE EXPECTED TO PUSH FOR MORE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORINOCO BELT, PROBABLY IN SOME KIND OF COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN PRIVATE TECHNOLOGY.
MCCLINTOCK

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